



Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: July 10, 2019

Time: 7:15 PM – 9:30 PM

Location: 730 Massachusetts Avenue, Town Hall Annex, 2nd Floor Conference Room

Minutes

Members in Attendance: Daniel Amstutz, Wayne Chouinard, Lenard Diggins, Charles Giroux, Howard Muise, Corey Rateau, Melissa Laube, Scott Smith.

Members Missing: Jeffrey Maxtutis, Michael Gordon.

Members of the Public: Jacob Deck.

1. Public Comments.

Jacob Deck stated his strong support of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) dedicated bus lane on Mass Ave and any efforts the Town is making to decarbonize the transportation system.

2. Administration.

TAC members approved the minutes of May 8 and June 12.

Howard Muise noted correspondence received from the Town Manager regarding the Sustainable Transportation Plan Advisory Committee. This will be discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

Muise distributed the active projects list and asked for updates on projects on the list. Corey Rateau noted that he discussed the Speed Safety Zone on Herbert Road in front of Magnolia Park with DPW before the July 4 holiday. The signs are somewhat specialized and DPW needs to order them before they can be installed. He also noted the STOP signs on Mystic Lake Drive and Maynard Street approaching Hayes Street have been installed, but the STOP bars on the pavement have not been painted yet.

3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on agenda).

Wayne Chouinard provided a memo for his TAC update. The sewer

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siphon rebuild on Mystic Street is under construction and ongoing. Various road rehabilitation and pavement preservation activities are occurring this summer. A pavement marking RFP has been advertised and includes re-marking the white pavement markings on Mass Ave in East Arlington; high friction red markings for the dedicated bus lane as a bid alternate; and green pavement markings for bike lanes in Arlington Center and sharrows from Pond Lane to Swan Place. DPW is also repainting crosswalks around town. Scott Smith noted the crosswalks on Summer Street should be repainted. Deck asked if bollards could be installed to separate the bike lane from vehicle traffic on the new bike lane on Mass Ave implemented as part of the Safe Travel Project. TAC members noted this treatment was not included in the original plan and there are issues with driveway and emergency access that need to be considered.

Rateau noted MassDOT has a three-year project to replace the lighting on Route 2 and the Concord Turnpike. The limits are from Lexington to Cambridge, on both sides of the road and in the median. There may be some minimal traffic impacts as a result of this work.

Daniel Amstutz said that the Town did not receive funding from the MassTrails Grant for the Lake Street/Minuteman Bikeway project. Town staff met with MassDOT and their consultant AECOM about the Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) project; there may be some scope changes due to budgetary limitations, but it's not clear yet. The automatic bicycle/pedestrian counter on the Bikeway was installed near Swan Place and is collecting data; there are some issues that need to be worked out with the software which MassDOT's consultant is working on. The Town may need to negotiate with the MBTA about the cost of the bus lane pending the results of the pavement marking bid. There has been considerable interest in the TAC Associate Member advertisement. The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) is undergoing staff changes and several positions are open.

4. Vote: Election of Officers.

Howard Muise was nominated as Chair of TAC, Jeff Maxtutis as Vice Chair, and Michael Gordon as Secretary. TAC voted to elect Muise, Maxtutis, and Gordon to continue on in their current roles with TAC.

5. Vote: Town Day Application (9/14/19).

Muise asked Amstutz to follow up with him about the TAC account number so he can fill out the Town Day application on line. TAC members briefly discussed the materials and activities for the Town Day

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booth and formed a working group including Scott Smith, Chuck Giroux, and Muise. TAC voted to approve the application for Town Day.

6. Vote: Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan.

Muise said the Town Manager had sent a letter to him requesting the nomination of a representative from TAC to the Sustainable Transportation Plan Advisory Committee, the formation of which was recently approved by the Select Board. The new committee expects to start meeting in the fall. Amstutz had mentioned it at the previous TAC meeting. The Executive Committee discussed who to nominate and agreed that Lenard Diggins should serve, given his involvement with the Chamber of Commerce and Arlington business community, the MBTA Rider Oversight Committee, and other key connections. TAC voted to approve Diggins as the representative to the Plan Advisory Committee.

7. New/Vote: Chestnut Street at Chestnut Terrace.

Muise explained that Paul Schlichtman had come to the previous TAC meeting to ask about a request sent to the Select Board in May concerning egress out of Chestnut Terrace onto Chestnut Street. Congestion is blocking the intersection and preventing vehicles from exiting onto Chestnut Street, causing long delays. The request is to install MUTCD signage to advise drivers that they must not block the intersection. It was noted that blocking an intersection is already against the law. There was discussion of both signage and pavement markings; while both may be helpful, the committee decided to start with signage first and see if that addressed the issue. Rateau noted that the sign may be regulatory, which means that it must be approved by the Select Board before it may be installed. He said he will handle the documentation necessary to bring it to the Select Board at an upcoming meeting. TAC voted to recommend this action to the Select Board with Rateau serving as lead.

8. Update: Jason Street between Irving and Mass Ave.

Muise explained that a resident of Jason Street came to the TAC at the June meeting and requested that TAC look at issues of speeding on Jason Street between Irving Street and Mass Ave. Amstutz noted he has been in contact with the resident, Laura Jarbeau, and asked that she come to a TAC meeting to explain her request because TAC has looked at the issue before and made some recommendations, mainly for the section near Menotomy Rocks Park. Rateau noted that the issue of speed on Jason Street has been studied several times and it has not been found to be a major issue. He also said he would prefer that a

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request to study the issue again should come from the Select Board and not through a public comment at a TAC meeting. The residents can petition the Select Board and see if they refer it back to TAC. There was discussion of the previous studies completed and it was noted that the speed was recorded farther south along Jason Street and not up by Jason and Mass Ave. Scott Smith suggested that the procedure for petitioning the Select Board can be explained to the resident, and in the meantime TAC can prepare to do a count if necessary. The count would have to wait until the fall, and since it has been several years since the last study, TAC can determine if conditions have changed. Rateau also noted that he has new automated traffic counters for collecting data and also has a radar recorder to collect speed, volume, and gaps between vehicles.

9. Discussion: Appleton Street at Park Ave.

Muise noted many people from the community near Appleton Street and Park Ave came to the previous TAC meeting in June to raise their concerns about the intersection. TAC is planning to take get a vendor to take count data at this intersection in the fall. Rateau noted that he can collect more data with his new counting equipment if needed. He also said this intersection has many crashes. There is limited visibility of Park Ave. traffic from Appleton St.; the downhill grade of Park Ave. northbound road also makes exiting Appleton St. challenging. Residents at the previous meeting said that they do not feel it is safe for their children to cross Park Ave at this location; Rateau noted that there has never been a traffic supervisor at this intersection. The residents had requested some kind of short term solutions, such as pedestrian crossing flags. However, TAC members noted this may give a false sense of security to pedestrians and may be detrimental. More significant improvements are necessary. Rateau noted he could get crash data from this intersection to share at the next meeting. It was suggested that TAC make a list of options for short-term improvements next meeting, with the assistance of the crash data. Muise said members should take a drive through the intersection before the next meeting to get a feeling for it.

10. Update: Park Ave.

Chouinard noted he has been working on some sketches for improving intersections on Park Ave between Route 2 and Mass Ave. There is also a need to fix accessibility issues and bus stop access along the corridor. He is not sure if it should be done piecemeal or as a large corridor project. New or upgraded signals may be needed at Park Ave and Park Circle, Park Ave at Paul Revere Road, Park Ave at Appleton, and Park

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Ave at Route 2. The Town may also be able to tap into Complete Streets funding for these projects. Muise said he did not want anything to delay the improvements that are badly needed at Park Ave and Appleton. TAC requested that Chouinard bring his intersection sketches of Park Ave and Appleton Street to the next TAC meeting.

11. Update: Crosswalk on Summer Street at Victoria Road/Buzzell Field.

The Select Board has approved the parking restrictions by the crosswalk at Summer Street and Victoria Road. It was noted that there is still interest in moving the crosswalk to the west side of the intersection, and this action does not preclude that. The parking restriction is a short term action; Chouinard noted that there are plans to reconstruct Summer Street in this vicinity in the next 2-3 years, which could include moving the crosswalk. Wrong-way traffic on Victoria Road was also discussed, as that was brought up by neighborhood residents as well. Rateau said he will look at rearranging or adding signage to discourage drivers going the wrong way on Victoria Road and he has also been discussing with Chouinard the possibility of installing pavement markings at Mystic Street and Victoria to reinforce that the road is one-way exiting onto Mystic.

12. Update: Crosswalk on Grove Street.

The TAC discussed how high school students get dropped off in the DPW parking lot in the morning and walk down the access road to get to AHS. Melissa Laube passed around data from the AHS rebuild Traffic Impact Analysis of traffic counts on Grove Street. Chouinard noted that DPW employees, residents doing business at DPW, and possibly AHS students park on Dudley Street and cross Grove Street. There are also students from classes that walk over to the tennis courts and climbing wall at Wellington Park. With the upgrades to the Park that are just finishing there may be more people going to the park. Smith said that pedestrian counts are needed here to get a better idea of the situation. Laube and Muise will work on gathering the count data, which will be done in September or October.

13. Update: Parking and Traffic Direction on Bartlett Avenue.

TAC discussed the issues that were raised by a resident about difficulty of traveling on Bartlett Avenue when there are cars parked on both sides. Rateau noted that any changes here could get pushback from the neighborhood, Mass Ave. businesses, and Whole Foods. Removing parking from one side would be problematic. Changing the traffic flow to be one direction would also make access to the grocery store and

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residences more difficult. Employees of the grocery store are encouraged to park on the side street so they do not take up space in the parking lot. Rateau will continue to look into this issue.

14. Update: Crosswalk on Academy at Maple Street.

The committee noted that a count or gap analysis is needed here to make a decision. Rateau also noted that the parking behind the Senior Center/Community Center will be redistributed to the various users and may free up more spaces in the lot, reducing the number of cars parked on Academy Street. The committee will plan to do a count in a week to determine how many pedestrians are crossing at Academy and Maple Street.

15. Update: Traffic Calming on Kensington Park.

Rateau shared data of a 48-hour count completed in May for Kensington Park, where there had been a request for traffic calming. The 85th percentile speed was 20 mph, and the average speed was 15 mph. The speed tolerance showed a low risk for speeding here. The counters were placed halfway between Kensington Road and Brantwood Road. Only a handful of people were going faster than the 85th percentile speed. About 200 vehicles per day were counted on the road. The TAC noted that Kensington Park is not useful as a cut-through street because there are several sharp bends you must go around and it does not directly link up to Jason Street. The data does not show a pattern of speeding here.

There being no further business, Muise adjourned the meeting at 9:30 PM.